
Notes

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is a household survey of the noninstitutionalized resident population of the United States, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The survey was designed to improve the measurement of the economic situation of persons, families, and households in the United States and to provide a tool for managing and evaluating government transfer and service programs.

The 1996 SIPP panel consists of 12 interviews, or waves, each of which gathered 4 months of retrospective data. The sample includes approximately 36,000 households. The SIPP has been matched to SSA administrative records. Receipt of disability benefits is based on December 1998 SSA records, while all other characteristics and income amounts are taken from the SIPP. The estimates are weighted using SIPP sample weights to produce population estimates.

Poverty calculations based on the SIPP use survey-reported family income for 1998. The poverty thresholds also are provided in the SIPP and are adjusted for family size and composition. In 1998, the poverty threshold for a one-person family under age 65 was \$8,480. For a four-person family with two related children under the age of 18, the poverty threshold was \$16,530.

SIPP and SSA counts of disabled beneficiaries differ because the SIPP excludes people living in institutions or outside the continental United States. And, the match rate between the SIPP and SSA records is not a perfect match. Furthermore, the SIPP estimates are based on a sample and therefore are subject to sampling error. Standard errors can be used to measure this sampling variability. Various sources of nonsampling error also may be important.

Because the SIPP uses a complex sample design, it is inappropriate to calculate standard errors assuming a simple random sample. Doing so will result in estimated standard errors that are biased downward. Rather than attempting to provide tables with approximate SIPP variance estimates, the interested reader is referred to the *Source and Accuracy Statement for the 1996 Public Use Files from the Survey of Income and Program Participation*, available on the SIPP Internet site at www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/s&a96_040501.pdf. The source and accuracy statement provides information on direct calculation of standard errors for SIPP estimates. It also provides detailed instructions for calculating standard errors using generalized variance parameters and simplified tables.
